ANES 42 (2005) 312-317

On Two Tablets from Kāmid el-Lōz

Nadav NA'AMAN

Department of Jewish History
Tel Aviv University
Ramat Aviv 69978
ISRAEL
E-mail: nnaaman@post.tau.ac.il

Abstract

The article discusses two broken tablets from the Egyptian centre of Kumidi. Tablet KL 78:200 is a school text in which the signs are listed in a non-regular order. Eight letters dispatched to Kumidi have been discovered so far indicating that professional scribes capable of reading and writing in Akkadian lived there. Tablet KL 78:200 shows that Akkadian was not only written, but also learned in the place. The second fragmentary tablet was probably sent by Aziru of Amurru to the governor of Kumidi demonstrating the city's central role in the Egyptian system of government after Aziru has conquered the Egyptian centres of Ṣumur and Ullasa in the late Amarna period.

Nine tablets and fragments from Kāmid el-Lōz (Kumidi) an Egyptian centre of government located on the major crossroads of the southern Lebanese Beqaʿ have thus far been published.[1] Eight of them (KL 69:100, KL 69:277, KL 69:278, KL 69:279, KL 72:600, KL 74:300; Arnaud 1991; Huehnergard 1996) are letters exchanged with neighbouring rulers and officials, the genre of the ninth tablet (KL 78:200) is yet to be clarified. Most (or all) the tablets were written in the second half of the 14th century BCE, shortly after the Amarna period. The post-Amarna date is proved by the two letters sent by Ili-rapi', Rib-Hadda's successor in Byblos, to the "magnate" (LÚ.GAL) of Kumidi, and by the pharaonic letter sent to Zalaya,

[1] Edzard 1976, pp. 62–67; 1980, pp. 52–54; 1982, pp. 131–135; Wilhelm 1973, pp. 69–75; 1982, pp. 123–129; Arnaud 1991, pp. 7–16; Huehnergard 1996, pp. 97–113. For the latter tablet, see recently Arnaud 2003, pp. 125–127.

probably Biryawaza's successor on the throne of Damascus.[2] The eight letters demonstrate the centrality of Kumidi in the Egyptian system of government of northern Canaan after the conquest of Ṣumur and Ullasa by Aziru of Amurru. The governor of Kumidi supervised the areas of northern Canaan and the coast of Lebanon, and whenever necessary the local rulers addressed him as the higher Egyptian authority in this vast area.

In what follows I will discuss the text and genre of tablet KL 78:200 and the first part of the badly-broken letter published by Arnaud (1991).

A School Text

Edzard published a copy and a short discussion of tablet KL 78:200,[3] but did not define the letter's genre. Arnaud suggested that it might be an incantation,[4] and Hallo restored a few lines and suggested that it was a school text.[5] The tablet is badly broken, and only about half of the right side of the obverse and the beginning of the five final lines of the reverse have survived. The following is a suggested restoration of the text.

Obv.	Rev.
1. ab í[b ub]	1. x [x x]
2. la lí [lu?]	2. ṣi [ṣa? ṣu?]
3. din du d[i?]	3. si s[á? su?]
4. ma me m[u]	4. ta [ti? tu?]
5. gu gír [ga?]	5. za z[i zu?]
6. ud? ad? i[d?]	
7. ša! še [šu?]	
8. [r]u ri [ra?]	

Paleographic note

Line 6: Edzard copied a *pi* sign at the beginning of the line. However, the second sign does not fit the series *pi pa pu*. Moreover, the sign *pi* is not widely attested in the second millennium BCE. With all due caution, I suggest deciphering the line *ud? ad? i*[*d?*].

[2] For the date, see Na'aman 1988, pp. 179–191; Huehnergard 1996, pp. 98–100.
[3] Edzard 1980, pp. 52–54.
[4] Arnaud 1991, p. 8 n. 7.
[5] Hallo 1992, p. 80 n. 109.

Discussion

According to Edzard, about three-quarter of the obverse is preserved and the tablet was written on its upper and lower parts. Hence, the original number of lines on the tablet is about 22, 13 of which (one non-deciphered) have been preserved. Four to six series of CV syllables are missing (BA, Ḫ̮A, KA, NA and possibly QA and ṬA), the other lines must have started with vowels (VC).

No systematic order of signs appears on the tablet. The first syllable of the CV pattern ends with either *a*, *i*, or *u*, and sometime a CVC sign is written (i.e., *din*, *gír*).

Of the nine tablets discovered so far in the Egyptian centre of Kumidi, only exercise KL 78:200 was written at the site. The dispatch of eight letters to Kumidi indicates that professional scribes capable of reading and writing in Akkadian lived there. Tablet KL 78:200 shows that Akkadian was not only written, but also learned in the place.

School texts have been discovered in some Canaanite cities (e.g., Hazor, Megiddo, Ashkelon),[6] and in the Egyptian centres of government (Kumidi and Aphek).[7] Eight tablets and fragments were uncovered in the excavations of the latter site, including a letter, two lexical texts, two administrative tablets and three unidentified fragments.[8] The site of Late Bronze II Aphek was excavated in its entirety whereas only part of Kāmid el-Lōz has been uncovered; a comparison of the overall number of tablets discovered at the two sites may be misleading. Nevertheless, the uncovering of school texts in the two sites indicates that the training of young scribes was taking place there. Did the Egyptians try to monopolize the training of local scribes, thereby increasing their supervision of their masters, the Canaanite rulers?

[6] van der Toorn 2000, pp. 105–106, with earlier literature; Huehnergard and van Soldt 1999, pp. 184–192.

[7] Rainey's suggestion (1998, pp. 239–242) that the small clay cylinder uncovered at Beth-shean is a school exercise is unlikely. The cylinder is too small for writing an exercise. Moreover, its clay is derived from the central hill country. It is a letter sent by Tagi, possibly an official of Shechem, to Lab'ayu, ruler of Shechem, when the latter stayed at Beth-shean. For details, see Goren, Finkelstein and Na'aman 2004, pp. 259–260).

[8] Rainey 1975, pp. 125–129; 1976, pp. 137–140; Owen 1981, pp. 1–17; Hallo 1981, pp. 18–24; Singer 1983, pp. 3–25. For additional literature, see Horowitz, Oshima and Sanders 2002, p. 755.

A Letter of Aziru to the Governor of Kumidi

Arnaud published a badly broken letter, restored it and suggested that it was sent by the governor of Kumidi to the ruler of Amurru.[9] However, the words of the blessing fit a message to an Egyptian official, not to a Canaanite ruler. Moreover, in lines 8-9 the sender mentions *ḫalta/i* brought by the Suteans to "my country". The reference to a defined territory fits a city-state ruler, not an Egyptian governor. The suggestion that the tablet is a copy of the original letter sent to Amurru is unlikely.

Enclosed is a tentative restoration of the obverse of the letter.

1. [a-na LÚ.GAL AD-ia um-ma ^{m}A-z]i-ri
2. [DUMU-ka lu$^{?}$-ú$^{?}$ šul$^{?}$-mu$^{?}$ a-na L]Ú.GAL
3. [AD-ia DINGIR^{meš} š]u-lum-ka šu-<lum> ANŠE.KUR^{meš}-RA-ka4
4. [^{giš}GIGIR^{meš}-ka4 KU]R-ka4 li-iš-al
5. [iš$^{?}$-te$^{?}$-me$^{?}$] i-nu-ma šap-ra-ta
6. [a-na ia-ši] a-wa-te LÚ^{meš} Su-te
7. [ù$^{?}$ i]-nu-ma uš-ši-ir-ti a-na-ku
8. [a-na LÚ^{meš}] Su-te ù la-qú \ ḫa-al-ta
9. [ù i$^{?}$-ru$^{?}$-bu$^{?}$ a-n]a KUR-ia ša-ni-ta5 i-nu-ma
10. [ša-ap-ra-ta a]-na ia-ši
11. [ù al$^{?}$-lu$^{?}$-mi$^{?}$ uš-ši-ir]-ti a-na-ku
12. [a-na LÚ^{meš} Su-te a-n]a la-qé \ ḫa-al-ti
13. [ša …

Translation:

[Say to magnate, my father; message of Az]iru, [your son. May all go well to the m]agnate, [my father. May God] show concern for you, your horses, [your chariots and] your [coun]try.

[I have heard] what you wrote [to me] about the affairs of the Suteans, [that] when I sent [to the Su]teans they took *ḫalta/i* [and entered t]o my country. Furthermore, when [you wrote t]o me, [indeed] I [sen]t [to the Suteans t]o take the *ḫalta/i* [that they have brought and …

Notes:

Lines 1-2: For the restoration, see the text published by Huehnergard, *ZA* 86 (1996) 100, lines 1-2.

[9] Arnaud 1991, pp. 7–16.

Lines 3-4: Arnaud restored the blessing on the basis of EA 96, lines 4-6. A similar blessing appears on a recently published Late Bronze letter from Hazor. See W. Horowitz, *IEJ* 50 (2000) 17, lines 4-6.

Lines 8, 12: The language (West Semitic? Hurrian?) and the meaning of the noun *ḫalta/i* is unknown.

The text is too broken to suggest a reconstruction of its contents, in particular since the key word, *ḫalta/i*, (possibly a commodity made of metal) remains unknown. Noteworthy are the words "they detain (*i-ka-lu*) the men" in line 20, and the reference in line 21 to silver and copper ([K]Ù.[BA]BBAR^{meš} URUDU \ *nu-ḫu-uš-ti*). Does *ḫalta/i* mean "booty", or the like, and does the text deal with the capture of captives and their release?

Bibliography

Arnaud, D.

1991 "Une lettre de Kamid el-Loz". *Semitica* 40: 7–16.

2003 "Remarques sur une lettre de Kāmid el-Lōz / Kumidi de l'époque dite d'El Amarna". *Studi Miceni ed Egeo-Anatolici* 45: 125–127.

Edzard, D. O.

1970 "Die Tontafeln von Kāmid el-Lōz", in *Kāmid el-Lōz — Kumidi. Schriftdokumente aus Kāmid el-Lōz.* (Saarbrücker Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 7), edited by D. O. Edzard *et al.*, pp. 55–62. Bonn: Rudolf Habelt.

1976 "Ein Brief an den 'Grossen' von Kumidi aus Kāmid el-Lōz". *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und verwandte Gebiete* 66: 62–67.

1980 "Ein neues Tontafelfragment (Nr. 7) aus Kāmid el-Lōz". *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und verwandte Gebiete* 70: 52–54.

1982 "Ein Brief an den 'Grossen' von Kumidi aus Kāmid el-Lōz", in *Bericht über die Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen in Kāmid el-Lōz in den Jahren 1971 bis 1974* (Saarbrücker Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 32), edited by R. Hachmann et al., pp. 131–135. Bonn: Rudolf Habelt.

Goren, Y., Finkelstein I. and Na'aman, N.

2004 *Inscribed in Clay. Provenance Study of the Amarna Tablets and Other Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (Monograph Series of the Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology). Jerusalem: Graphit.

Hallo, W. W.

1981 "A Letter Fragment from Tel Aphek". *Tel Aviv* 8: 18–24.

1992 "The Syrian Contribution to Cuneiform Literature and Learning", in *New Horizons in the Study of Ancient Syria* (Bibliotheca Mesopotamica 25), edited by M. W. Chavalas and J. L. Hayes, pp. 69–88. Malibu: Udenda.

Horowitz, W. Oshima, T. and Sanders, S.
2002 "A Bibliographical List of Cuneiform Inscriptions from Canaan, Palestine/ Philistia, and the Land of Israel."*Journal of the American Oriental Society* 122: 753–766.

Huehnergard, J.
1996 "A Byblos Letter, Probably from Kāmid el-Lōz". *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und verwandte Gebiete* 86: 97–113.

Huehnergard, J. and Van Soldt, W.
1999 "A cuneiform Lexical Text from Ashkelon with a Canaanite Column". *Israel Exploration Journal* 49: 184–192.

Na'aman, N.
1988 "Biryawaza of Damascus and the Date of the Kāmid el-Lōz 'Apiru Letters". *Ugarit-Forschungen* 20: 179–193.

Owen, D. I.
1981 "An Akkadian Letter from Ugarit at Tel Aphek". *Tel Aviv* 8:1–17.

Rainey, A. F.
1975 "Two cuneiform fragments from Tel Aphek". *Tel Aviv* 2: 125–129.
1976 "A Tri-lingual cuneiform fragment from Tel Aphek". *Tel Aviv* 3: 137–140.
1998 "Syntax, Hermeneutics and History". *Israel Exploration Journal* 48: 239–251.

Singer, I.
1983 "Takuḫlinu and Ḫaya: Two Governors in the Ugarit Letter from Tel Aphek". *Tel Aviv* 10: 3–25.

van der Toorn, K.
2000 "Cuneiform Documents from Syria-Palestine: Texts, Scribes, and Schools". *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 116: 98–113.

Wilhelm, G.
1973 "Ein Brief der Amarna-Zeit aus Kāmid el-Lōz (KL 72:600)". *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und verwandte Gebiete* 63: 69–75.
1982 "Die Fortsetzungstafel eines Briefes aus Kāmid el-Lōz (KL 72:600)", in *Bericht über die Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen in Kāmid el-Lōz in den Jahren 1971 bis 1974* (Saarbrücker Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 32), edited by R. Hachmann. et al., pp. 123–129. Bonn: Rudolf Habelt.